

Energy Climate Partnership of the Americas

Department of State

Program Office: The U.S. Embassy in San José, Costa Rica
Funding Opportunity Title: ECPA Central America and Caribbean Regional
Clean Energy Program
Announcement Type: Grant or Cooperative Agreement
Deadline for Applications: 12:00 PM on June 4, 2012

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants are non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-profit organizations (NPOs). Grants and / or Cooperative Agreements will be awarded directly to the organization. NGOs and NPOs must provide documentation of legal status with the proposal. After the Grants Officer determines grant and / or cooperative agreement recipients, based on the recommendations of a diverse review committee, selected organizations may be subject to an audit of financial accounting systems and procedures before receiving US government funds.

NGOs and NPOs are encouraged to include some form of partnership with a public or private institution, which may participate in-kind (human capital, facilities, equipment, etc.) or with financial support. While financial cost sharing or matching is not a minimum requirement, a successful partnership will be a factor in evaluating proposals' competitiveness.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact

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Table of Contents

I.	Executive Summary	3
II.	Background	3
III.	Proposal Narrative Guidelines: Overarching Concepts for Successful Proposals ...	4
A.	Clean Technology (Evaluation Weighting = 15%)	5
B.	Partnerships (Evaluation Weighting = 15%)	5
C.	Regional (Evaluation Weighting = 20%)	5
D.	Media Plan (Evaluation Weighting = 10%)	6
IV.	Proposal Narrative Guidelines: Proposal Themes (Evaluation Weighting = 25%) ..	6
A.	Mobilizing the Private Sector to Influence Legal/Regulatory Environment and Public Awareness	6
B.	Technical Aspects of Clean Energy and Clean Technology Deployment	7
V.	Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI)	8
A.	Application Submission Process	8
B.	Application Deadline	9
C.	Technical Eligibility	9
D.	Registration Requirements	9
E.	Technical Format Requirements	9
F.	Monitoring and Evaluation (Evaluation Weighting = 15%)	10
G.	Award Period	10
H.	Budget Guidelines	10
VI.	Award Administration Information	13
A.	Award Notices	13
B.	Anticipated Time to Award	13
C.	Reporting Requirements	14
D.	Administrative and National Policies	14

I. Executive Summary

The U.S. Embassy in San José, Costa Rica seeks grant / cooperative agreement proposals in amounts of no less than \$100,000 up to a maximum of \$250,000 from organizations interested in promoting clean energy in Central America and the Caribbean. The Embassy plans to award a total of no more than \$850,000 for a project period not to exceed 18 months, pending congressional funding approval and availability of funds. Submissions in English to the request for proposals (RFP) will be reviewed by a committee that will select between four and no more than six projects. Awarded grants / cooperative agreements will receive financial disbursements in amounts approved by the Grants Officer (GO) upon demonstration of satisfactory progress. There is no obligation or reasonable expectation of additional funding from the U.S. Government (USG) upon completion of the project period. The Embassy reserves the right not to award any funds based on the quality of the proposals received.

Competitive proposals will lay out a plan for taking a best practice or new technology in the field of clean energy and / or energy efficiency to the next phase of deployment. Under public and private research programs and alliances such as the Energy Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA), various clean energy demonstration projects are being undertaken in this region. A strong submission to this RFP will take the “demonstration project” concept to the next level by leveraging a strong public or private sector partnership, using a commercially viable new technology, and by engaging multi-country networks. Preference will be given to organizations that can demonstrate a strong programmatic foundation and a history of success, which will more quickly allow for implementation and scale. Proposals should be designed to demonstrate concrete deliverables upon completion that are within the scope of the proposed budget. From a project management perspective, a competitive proposal will include an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework.

If possible, the committee will select at least one project from each of two dimensions outlined in section IV of this request for proposals; a) mobilizing the private sector, and b) technical aspects of clean energy and clean technology deployment. Technical aspects proposals should specifically address at least one of the four themes described in the section, “Proposal Themes.” If possible, the committee will select at least one proposal with a geographic focus in Central America and one in the Caribbean. Ultimately projects will be selected based on merit, rather than dimension or geographic requirements.

II. Background

This funding will support USG objectives under the Energy Climate Partnership of the Americas Initiative. At the April 2009 Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, leaders of the Western Hemisphere underscored that energy and climate change are among the most important issues confronting our future and they

reaffirmed their commitment to work together towards a clean energy future. Responding to these shared challenges, President Obama invited all governments in the Western Hemisphere to join in an Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA). President Obama said “our hemisphere has bountiful natural resources that could make renewable energy plentiful and sustainable, while creating jobs for our people.” An Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas, he said, “will help us learn from one another, share technologies, leverage investment, and maximize our comparative advantage.”

President Obama suggested ECPA focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy, cleaner and more efficient use of fossil fuels, energy poverty, and infrastructure. In the first year, nearly a dozen initiatives and projects began under ECPA in these areas, led by the United States, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago. Inter-American and regional institutions such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE), multilateral development banks such as the World Bank, private sector, civil society, and academia are supporting ECPA.

In April 2010, as part of ECPA, U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu invited Western Hemisphere energy ministers to the Energy and Climate Ministerial of the Americas to highlight progress, announce new partnerships and facilitate the development of new initiatives among governments, institutions, private industry, and civil society. At this ministerial, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton proposed ECPA’s focus be expanded to also include initiatives regarding sustainable forests and land use, as well as climate change adaptation.

Under ECPA, the lead and/or participating governments and public and private sector partners contribute resources to implement the initiatives. ECPA’s initial focus and structure was developed at the June 2009 Americas Energy and Climate Symposium in Lima, Peru, co-hosted by the Peruvian and U.S. governments and the Institute of the Americas. Participants acknowledged the enormous potential to accelerate clean energy uptake in the Americas, identified opportunities for partnership under ECPA, and stressed that initiatives should produce tangible results, promote best policy and regulatory practices, and build capacity in the design, evaluation, and implementation of clean and environmentally-sustainable energy policies and projects.

<http://www.ecpamericas.org/About-ECPA.aspx>

III. Proposal Narrative Guidelines: Overarching Concepts for Successful Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated by a committee based on a weighted average of scores that measure how the proposal addresses certain factors. Factors include each of the following overarching concepts, how well the proposal addresses its chosen theme, and the organizations’ capability to manage the project using an effective M&E framework. Each factor will be scored on whether it meets or exceeds standards that are explained in

more detail below. The weight of each factor is shown in parentheses next to the paragraph heading.

A. Clean Technology (Evaluation Weighting = 15%)

A strong proposal in this category is one that builds on experience using clean technology and has a plan to deploy commercially viable proprietary or non-proprietary U.S. clean technology. Examples include rechargeable batteries or other electricity storage systems, smart meters and software applications, small-scale wind turbines, bio-digesters and inorganic waste gasification systems, alternative transportation fuels (including natural gas) or hybrid vehicles, and many others. The United States has invested over USD 90 billion in clean energy through programs such as the Department of Energy's Advanced Research Projects Agency for energy (ARPA-E). Ideas are available at <http://arpa-e.energy.gov/ProgramsProjects/Programs.aspx>. There is no minimum requirement to use U.S. technology.

B. Partnerships (Evaluation Weighting = 15%)

In order to receive points in this category, a proposal must include a partnership between the NGO submitting the proposal and one or more public or private institutions, which may participate in-kind or with financial support and with whom the organization has a history of past successes. Partners may include a business alliance, such as a Chamber of Commerce, an advocacy group; such as the Advanced Energy Economy (<http://www.aee.net/>); a government agency; a multilateral organization, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB); or a private business. A competitive proposal in this category will exceed expectations by clearly articulating in-kind partner contributions and by including financial cost sharing. It would be able to demonstrate the partnership's history, past success, and have a plan for leveraging these USG funds. Applicants may consider all types of cost sharing. Examples include the use of office space owned by other entities; donated or borrowed supplies and equipment; (non-USG) sponsored travel costs; waived indirect costs; and program activities, translations, or consultations.

C. Regional (Evaluation Weighting = 20%)

All proposals should be regional in nature, which can be described as directly involving partners in two or more countries. A regional proposal could be a pilot initiative, trade fair or other deliverable executed in multiple countries while sharing ideas and lessons learned. It could also involve regional cooperation such as an established alliance between universities from multiple countries to study deployment of a new technology (for example, municipal solid waste-to-energy, geothermal, and/or carbon recycling) across the region, or a regional alliance of Chambers of Commerce to advocate for national policies that encourage deployment of clean technologies. A competitive proposal in this category can demonstrate longevity or depth of relationship with a partner, past successes,

ability to affect change / political will, or experience with the U.S. and/or Costa Rican business communities.

D. Media Plan (Evaluation Weighting = 10%)

A proposal that meets expectations will include a brief outline of the applicant's media plan, such as a press release, open forum to which journalists are invited, one-on-one media interviews, social media coverage, etc. Competitive proposals in the Media Plan category will include a basic plan and 1-2 strategies for engaging journalists so that they learn more about clean energy issues (i.e. regulatory hurdles, new technology, industry players, etc.) and are able to report more comprehensively.

IV. Proposal Narrative Guidelines: Proposal Themes (Evaluation Weighting = 25%)

Your proposal should focus on one of the following two dimensions; a) mobilizing the private sector or b) technical aspects of clean energy and clean technology deployment. If you choose "Technical Aspects" your project should specifically address at least one of the four themes described. Each technical aspects theme is designated to Central America, the Caribbean or both. Proposals should be limited to the designated geographic focus area identified for each theme. Please clearly state which dimension and theme you chose and your geographic focus. Proposals will be judged with a 25% weighting on how well they address the relevant dimension and theme.

A. Mobilizing the Private Sector to Influence Legal/Regulatory Environment and Public Awareness

A "mobilizing the private sector" proposal would plan and execute a trade fair, business plan competition, conference, workshop(s) or other activities designed to influence legal / regulatory policies and public awareness. Rather than being simply thought / discussion events, a strong proposal should pursue specific outcomes, and identify next steps and how participants will remain engaged. Priority will be given to projects deemed competitive that support private investment in energy generation and distribution or investment in energy efficiency.

A business plan competition might promote new clean technology ideas and include a policy review that identifies ways to incentivize clean tech purchases. A conference might promote regulatory tools like competitive auctions, feed-in tariffs, and power purchasing agreements and be complemented by a trade show. A competitive conference idea could address specific obstacles, identify critical market players, and have a plan for engaging those players to eliminate obstacles. A strong proposal would connect capital, entrepreneurs, and public policy and result in the adoption of innovative processes and/or technologies.

Geographic Focus: Central America and/or Caribbean

Potential Recipients: A non-profit organization that influences the public and private sectors to pursue clean energy sources, low carbon development, etc.

B. Technical Aspects of Clean Energy and Clean Technology Deployment

Distributed Generation based on small-scale wind / solar or other sources

A distributed generation proposal would use solar, small-scale wind, bio-fueled micro-turbines or other technologies, and innovative smart grid or electricity storage technology to execute distributed generation pilots. A competitive proposal that exceeds minimum requirements will deploy existing U.S. technologies. In addition to the technical aspects of distributed generation, a strong proposal would address any regulatory barriers to feed-in tariffs, and where possible plug into a national grid.

Geographic Focus: Central America and/or Caribbean

Potential Recipients: Academic or research institution, or a non-profit organization that influences the public and private sectors to pursue clean energy sources, low carbon development, etc.

Fuel Switching for Electricity Generation or Transportation Purposes

As opposed to a research-focused project, a fuel switching proposal would outline a plan for deploying existing technologies and it would engage a public or private sector partner to execute a pilot(s). A successful proposal would make use of a known alternative fuel for electricity generation and/or transportation such as liquid natural gas (LNG) or biofuels. While liquid hydrogen is not ruled out, a natural gas or biofuel proposal would receive priority consideration as technology is more advanced to quickly deploy U.S. and Central American natural resources. A project might partner with an organization like the Environmental Defense Fund to adapt its successful FedEx hybrid vehicle fleet conversion project to a company operating in Central America (<http://business.edf.org/casestudies/edf-and-fedex-driving-toward-cleaner-trucks>). As another example, a project might use available technology to convert organic (pineapple or banana waste prevalent in Central America) and/or municipal solid waste (tires, etc.) into biogas and biofuels.

Geographic Focus: Central America

Potential Recipients: A non-profit organization that influences the public and private sectors to pursue clean energy sources, low carbon development, etc. or an academic or research institution.

Tidal, Ocean Power

Every nation of Central America and the Caribbean borders, or is surrounded by, the sea, and “the marine renewables industry stands on the cusp of commercialization in the United States,” according to the Ocean Renewable Energy Coalition (OREC, see: <http://www.oceanrenewable.com/>). An ocean,

wave, and/or tidal energy proposal could focus on how to move beyond assessments of marine energy “hot spots” (e.g., see: <http://www.oceanrenewable.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/OREC-P-R-New-DOE-Reports-on-Wave-Tidal-Energy-Production-1-18-12-2.pdf>), or could promote links between academic and commercial sectors in the region, or private-public partnerships, and/or could help support implementation of pilot projects.

Geographic Focus: Central America and/or Caribbean

Potential Recipients: Academic or research institution, or a non-profit organization that influences the public and private sectors to pursue clean energy sources, low carbon development, etc.

Geothermal in Central America

While there has long been awareness of the geothermal potential of numerous sites in Central America (see, e.g.: <http://www.bl-a.com/ECB/PDFFiles/GeoResLAC.pdf>), there remain obstacles to the full exploitation of geothermal resources that could help expand rural electrification efforts, offset GHG emissions, and/or reduce that area’s dependence on imported hydrocarbons. Proposals, focused on Central America, could facilitate the exchange of lessons learned from efforts to harness geothermal sites for energy generation in countries of the region, review whether laws specific to geothermal power exist or are helpful, show how small geothermal projects (perhaps coupled with mini-grids) might advance rural electrification goals (see, e.g.: <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy99osti/25107.pdf> & <http://geoheat.oit.edu/bulletin/bull20-2/art3.pdf>), and/or help to bring policy-makers together with companies that offer new/improved geothermal technology (see: http://geo-energy.org/Major_companies.aspx & <http://www.geothermal.org/11MarApril20.pdf>).

Geographic Focus: Central America

Potential Recipients: Academic or research institution, or a non-profit organization that influences the public and private sectors to pursue clean energy sources, low carbon development, etc.

V. Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI)

A. Application Submission Process

Applicants may submit applications by email to SanJoseCleanEnergyRFP@state.gov, or www.Grants.gov.

For questions about this solicitation, contact:

Email: SanJoseCleanEnergyRFP@state.gov (Preferred method of communication)

Phone: +506 2519-2392

B. Application Deadline

All applications must be submitted **on or before June 4, 2012, 12:00 PM local time** in Costa Rica. Applications submitted after 12:00 PM will be ineligible for consideration. Appendices, attachments, exhibits, etc. for applications already submitted will not be accepted after the deadline. **Begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be **no exceptions** to this application deadline.

C. Technical Eligibility

Technically eligible submissions are those which: 1) arrive electronically to SanJoseCleanEnergyRFP@state.gov or www.Grants.gov ; 2) have heeded all instructions contained in the Request for Proposals (RFP) and Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI), including length and completeness of submission; and 3) do not violate any of the guidelines stated in the solicitation and this document.

D. Registration Requirements

In order to apply for an award, all organizations must:

- be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR);
- maintain an active registration with current information in the CCR;
- obtain a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number, a 9-digit identifier; and
- provide a scanned copy of proof of the Organization's Legal Status.

Visit www.grants.gov to begin mandatory registration processes for the CCR and DUNS numbers.

In addition, if the organization plans to sub-contract or sub-grant any of the funds under an award, those ***sub-awardees must also have a DUNS number***. Certain exceptions apply.

Completing all of these steps can take **up to 4 weeks**, especially for an international organization. Applicants are urged to begin this process well before the submission deadline. No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps.

Organizations that have used grants.gov in the past: Ensure that the organization's registration in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) is up to date, and is linked to the appropriate DUNS number. CCR Registrations must be reviewed and updated annually. Visit www.ccr.gov for more information regarding CCR registration.

E. Technical Format Requirements

Applicants must include the following in the proposal submission. **All submissions must be in English.**

1. An Executive Summary of the proposal and budget.
2. Table of Contents that lists application contents and attachments (if any).
3. Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424A and SF424B, as directed on

www.grants.gov. The Certifications and Assurances that your organization is agreeing to in signing the 424 are available at www.statebuy.state.gov.

4. If your organization engages in lobbying activities, a Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) form is required.
5. Proposal Narrative (not to exceed 6 pages, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font in Microsoft Word, at least one-inch margins), following the structure described in the Proposal Narrative Guidelines of the RFP.
6. Summary Budget in USD, using the format shown below.
7. Budget Narrative (not to exceed 6 pages) that includes an explanation for each line item in the spreadsheet, as well as the source, and description of all cost share offered.
8. Attachments may be included, (letters of support, CVs of key personnel, project experience, etc) but should not be unreasonably lengthy.
9. If your organization has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, include your latest NICRA as a PDF file.
10. A PDF file copy of your organization's most recent A-133 audit, if applicable. If not, please include a copy of your most recent in-house audit, if available.
11. Number all pages, including budget and addenda.
12. Format all pages to standard 8 ½ x 11 paper with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

F. Monitoring and Evaluation (Evaluation Weighting = 15%)

Proposals must include a detailed plan on how the project's impact and effectiveness will be monitored and evaluated throughout the project. Successful monitoring and evaluation depend on:

- setting short-term and long-term goals that are clear, attainable, measurable, and placed in a reasonable time frame;
- linking program activities to stated goals;
- developing performance indicators that are quantifiable, have realistic targets, and are categorized into outputs or outcomes. The recipient will be required to report to Embassy San José on progress made towards indicator targets.

G. Award Period

Proposal activities should be executed between August 1, 2012 and January 28, 2014. All award money should be spent with invoices paid by December 31, 2013.

H. Budget Guidelines

In addition to the budget information required on the SF-424A, applicants must provide the following three elements as part of the budget submission:

- A. Summary Budget
- B. Detailed Line Item Budget (Direct and Indirect Costs)
- C. Budget Narrative

Summary Budget

The budget categories should match those on the SF-424A, as show in the sample below.

SAMPLE Summary BUDGET

Organization Name

Project Title

Project Duration

	Requested Federal Funds
A Personnel	0.00
B Fringe Benefits	0.00
C Travel	0.00
D Equipment	0.00
E Supplies	0.00
F Contractual	0.00
G Construction	0.00
H Other Direct Costs	0.00
I Total Direct charges	0.00
I Total Indirect costs	0.00
J Total Project Cost	0.00
K Cost Share (if applicable)	0.00

Detailed Line Item Budget

Applicants must provide a detailed line-item budget (in Microsoft Excel or similar spreadsheet format) outlining specific cost requirements within each of the summary budget categories.

- 11 font or larger; must fit on 8x11 letter sized paper, not legal size
- Any cost sharing should be included in a separate column. Cost sharing is the portion of program cost not borne by the U.S. Embassy in San José. Cost share can be either cash or in-kind; assign a US dollar monetary value to each in-kind contribution. If the proposed project is a component of a larger program, identify other funding sources for the proposal and indicate the specific funding amount to be provided by those sources.
- The budget should be for the entire project period. Successful applicants may be asked to provide a year-by-year budget after the award is signed.
- All sub-award costs should be listed under Line F, "Contractual," and should also be broken out and organized according to the subcategories. All sub-awardees must be organizations with DUNS numbers (certain exceptions apply). Individual contractors should also be listed under Line F, and should each be listed separately from sub-grantee line items.
- All line items must be described in the budget narrative

Budget Narrative

Include a budget narrative (preferably in Microsoft Word format) to explain each line-item and how the amounts were derived, as well as the source and description of all cost-share offered.

Personnel – Identify staffing requirements by each position title and brief description of duties. List annual salary of each position, percentage of time and number of months devoted to project (e.g., Administrative Director: \$30,000/year x 25% x 8.5 months; calculation: $\$30,000/12 = \$2,500 \times 25\% \times 8.5 \text{ months} = \$5,312$).

Fringe Benefits - State benefit costs separately from salary costs and explain how benefits are computed for each category of employee - specify type and rate.

Travel - Staff and participant travel, including international and in-country travel, and per diem/maintenance: includes lodging, meals and incidentals for both participant and staff travel. Per diem rates may not exceed the published U.S. government allowance rates (available from the www.gsa.gov website); however, applicants may use per diem rates lower than official government rates.

Explain differences in fares among travelers on the same routes: e.g., project staff member traveling for three weeks whose fare is higher than that of staff member traveling for four months. All travel must be in compliance with the Fly America Act.

Equipment –provide justification for any equipment purchase/rental, defined as tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5000 or more.

Supplies - list items separately using unit costs (and the percentage of each unit cost being charged to the grant) for photocopying, postage, telephone/fax, printing, and office supplies (e.g., Telephone: $\$50/\text{month} \times 50\% = \$25/\text{month} \times 12 \text{ months}$).

Contractual – For each sub-grant/contract please provide a detailed line item breakdown explaining specific services. In the sub-award budgets, provide the same level of detail for all line items (personnel, travel, supplies, direct costs, etc) required of the direct applicant.

Other Direct Costs - these will vary depending on the nature of the project. Justify each in the budget narrative.

Indirect Charges - See OMB Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations."

- If your organization has an indirect cost-rate agreement (NICRA) with the cognizant U.S. Agency, a copy must be included with the application.

- If your organization does not have a NICRA, you may not claim indirect charges in this field -- all indirect charges must be itemized and listed in Field H, Other Direct Costs.
- Do not include indirect costs against participant expenses in the budget.

Embassy San José WILL NOT CONSIDER budgeted line items for:

- Any unallowable costs, as described in OMB Circulars;
- Projects designed to advocate policy views or positions of foreign governments or views of a particular political faction;
- Entertainment expenses, including alcoholic beverages;

Before grants and/or cooperative agreements are awarded, Embassy San José reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with program needs and availability of funds.

Organizations should be familiar with OMB Circulars 22 CFR 145 (formerly A-110) (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Nonprofit Organizations), 48 CFR 230 (formerly A-122)/2 CFR 220 (formerly A-21) (Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations; Indirect Costs), and A-133 (Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and Other Nonprofit Organizations) on cost accounting principles. OMB Circulars are available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html>.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer (GO). The GO is the U.S. Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The GO will appoint a qualified grants officer representative (GOR) to liaise with the award recipient. The appropriate Department of State GOR would be the Environment Science Technology & Health (ESTH) Economic Officer in the country where the submitting organization has its headquarters OR where such an entity expects to conduct the greatest amount of operations as part of the project.

If a cooperative agreement is awarded, the recipient will have 60 days to complete and submit a work plan for negotiation. (Note: This is specific to cooperative agreements.). The work plan is based on the proposal and is subject to GO approval. In the case of a cooperative agreement, Embassy San José reserves the right to have “substantial involvement” in the project and with the grantee’s management of the project.

B. Anticipated Time to Award

Proposals recommended for funding should expect to be notified of conditional funding approval by **July 16, 2012**. Such proposals and organizations are reminded they will not

be authorized to incur costs until receipt of official U.S. grant documents. Organizations whose applications were not recommended for funding will be notified in writing. Unfunded proposals should expect to be notified by **July 16, 2012**.

C. Reporting Requirements

Awarded recipients are required to submit quarterly reports and a final report. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 30 days after the close of the project period. Reports must be submitted via electronic mail.

D. Administrative and National Policies

The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

Once the Request for Application deadline passes, Department of State staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the review process has been completed. The Department of State cannot provide any information regarding other applicants competing for the award.

The U.S. Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the U.S. Embassy has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award.

The Terms and Conditions and List of Certifications and Assurances are available on the State Department's procurement website at: <http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/>.